H. Sneath

SHENSTONE;

OR,

THE FORCE OF BENEVOLENCE.

A POEM.

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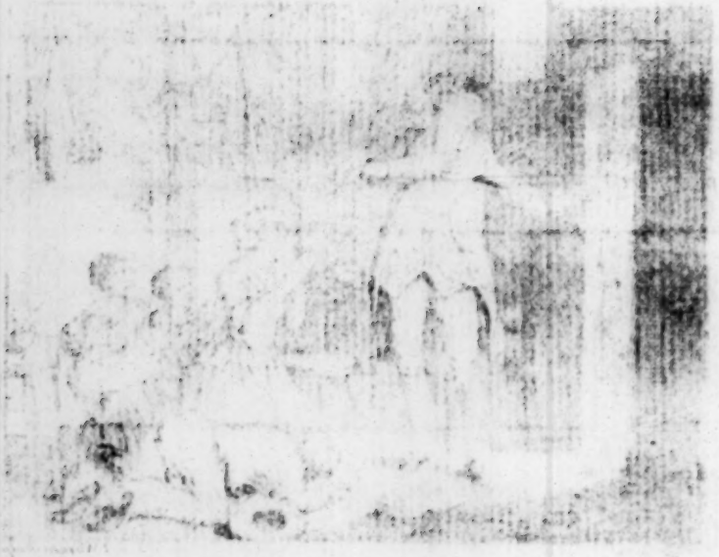


D E D I C A T E D

To THOSE, who, amidſt Affluence, deſcend to viſit the low Abodes of the Afflicted, and find more Felicity in alleviating the Wants of their Fellow-Creatures, than in all the gaudy Pageantry of Courts, Midnight Revelry, and Faſhionable Diſſipation,

By Their

Moſt humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

TO write well is the moſt arduous taſk in the world, and we ſhall find, if we look into the vaſt chaſm of time, that very few have attained the high ſummit of perfection in this particular. To write to pleaſe every one is impoſſible, but to pleaſe the better tempered part of mankind is not ſo impracticable; to theſe, the unprejudiced, I ſubmit my little chant. Should the ungentle critic peruſe my infant labour, probably his firſt employ will be to ſelect the chaff, and then accuſe me to Apollo; if ſo, may he, like that critic of old, have nothing returned him but the chaff for his pains. To Candour I appeal, as my ſupreme judge, and thus apologize for launching my little pinnace down the ſtream of time. The man I celebrate was not a lord, but he was virtuous; his worldly poſſeſſions were not mighty, but he had humanity. Unknown to courts, he lived a life recluſe, in dalliance with his favourite Muſe; Benevolence was his boſom's chiefeſt tenant; and if ever he ſighed to Providence for wealth, it was only to do good, and to improve a taſte which might become the greateſt monarch upon earth; ſuch a man was SHENSTONE. I his panegyriſt loved his virtues; prompted by them, I firſt eſſayed to ſing a theme too worthy for oblivion.

O could

PREFACE.

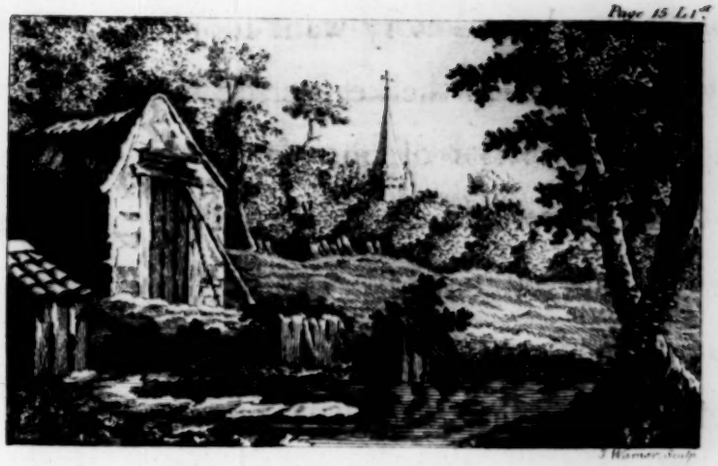
O could my feeble muſe to ſtrains aſpire,
Like his, who ſtrung the ſweet Mantuan lyre,
Then had my SHENSTONE'S truly honour'd name,
Appear'd conſpicuous on the ſcroll of Fame,
Till the laſt ſound ſhall fill this ample ſpace,
And ſhake all Nature to its firmeſt baſe.

But as it is impoſſible that I, like VIRGIL, ſhould ever aſcend the ſlippery rock of Fame, I ſhall ſtill content myſelf to gather the wild-thyme bloſſoms round its ſpacious foot, of which claſs the following is a ſample; and I moſt reſpectfully lay it on the fane of Candour.

ERRATA.

Page 10. line 7. for *each*, read *And ev'ry.*
Page 16. line 12. read *Vile oaths.*

THE



THE

FORCE OF BENEVOLENCE.

SHENSTONE! to paint thy worth, to ſing thy praiſe,
An artleſs bard in humble ſtrains eſſays;
O could his verſe the boon immortal give,
Thy fame and mem'ry ſhould for ever live.
Aönian maids, to whom the pow'rs belong
Of inſpiration, now aſſiſt my ſong!
Plume my young pinions, let my fancy ſoar
To that bleſt height your *Shenſtone* wing'd before;

Still (leſt like Cretan *Icarus* I fly)
Be *thou* at hand, and ev'ry want ſupply,
So may I 'ſcape when the keen critic throng
Inveſtigate the merits of my ſong.
Come thou, *Erato*, faireſt of the Nine,
Poſſeſs my ſoul, and live in ev'ry line,
For you alone direct the theme divine.
If when I ſtray the buſy croud among,
And note the manners of the motley throng,
My heart is ſtricken with an act humane,
A pleaſing ſomething ſteals thro' ev'ry vein,
My boſom glows, and, while intent to hear,
Th' extatic bliſs diſſolves into a tear.
Let the proud *Thing* whom Fortune has careſs'd,
Who ſtruts with gaudy tinſel on his veſt,
Though he diſplays a ſtar upon his breaſt,
My gentler ways with low deſpite deride,
They far excel *his* impotence of pride.
Say, is there ought on earth that men can prove,
To make them lov'd by *Him* who reigns above,

More

More than this godlike virtue to poſſeſs,
The will to aid his fellow in diſtreſs?
Can there be any ſpark of real worth,
To make us honour'd by the ſons of earth,
Like the warm heart that melts to ſympathy,
And bids the hand preſent a quick ſupply?
I've ſeen the wretch, to murd'rous grief a prey,
At ſuch a boon dance chearfully away;
Pleas'd with the ſight, have caught the kindred fire,
And bade my cares in the warm blaze expire!
If we poſſeſs enough of worldly wealth
To ſerve each juſt demand, and foſter health,
Why ſhould we murmur day ſucceeding day
For *more* of what we cannot bear away?
Who, in his ſenſes, would employ his life,
Bear heat and cold, and law's eternal ſtrife;
Watch day and night how ſordid int'reſt goes,
And make his neighbours his invet'rate foes;
Oppreſs his country, turn away his head,
From his own race who want the common bread,

Merely

Merely to ſtore each cranny of a cheſt
With traſh, not worth the trouble when poſſeſs'd?
This be my choice: howe'er life's current flow,
" A *competence* is all I aſk below."
What's in this gold, this univerſal toy,
Which men embrace with ſuch a zeſt of joy?
Will it procure the real heart-felt bliſs,
Expunge thoſe deeds which we have done amiſs?
Will it a ſeat 'mongſt yon bright realms ſecure,
Which a long life well-ſpent can ſcarce enſure?
Will it, if reputation fleet away,
Bring back the heav'n-born fair, or force her ſtay?
Will this, when fell remorſe ſhall tear the breaſt,
Smooth the ſad brow, and give the mourner reſt?
Or when diſeas'd, and rack'd with mortal pain,
Make the afflicted body whole again,
Adorn the cheek, or cool the fever'd vein?
When the phyſician of his ſkill deſpairs,
What then can ſoothe the hapleſs patient's cares?

Can

Can wealth, ambition ?---No diſtinction known,
Death viſits both the cottage and the throne ;
What's then this *panacea*, this gay toy ?
I anſwer, 'tis a boon producing joy
To him, whoſe lib'ral heart and hand beſtows
Food to the needy, to the naked cloaths;
Eaſe to the boſom which he finds diſtreſs'd,
And rights the innocent by pow'r oppreſs'd ;
Not that the man for theſe can be renown'd,
Who, without thought, beſtows his means around ;
As Heav'n has giv'n it, it ſhould be prefer'd,
Pearls were not made to ſtrew before the herd ;
The diamond pendent in the beauty's ear,
Sets off her charms, and ſeems itſelf more clear ;
But when on the rude cheek the treaſure glows,
This ſeems more rude, and that a bauble ſhews---
So a good action done in proper place,
The brighter ſeems and doth the actor grace,
But, when 'tis ill beſtow'd, we juſtly ſay,
He has more wealth than wit to throw away.

But to my theme; and *Shenſtone*, let my verſe
Thy gen'rous deeds in homely rhimes rehearſe.

Who has not heard of * *Scio*'s flow'ry vales,
Greeting the ſmell with aromatic gales;
Where unmoleſted thro' the circling year,
The ſong-birds warble forth their loves ſincere,
And ſcatter Lethe o'er th' enraptur'd ear;
Where in the cells of flow'rs in vernal bloom,
The bee attracted by the rare perfume,
Imbibes a balm his honey-comb to ſtore,
Purer than that on Hybla's thyme-clad ſhore;
Such was the † Leaſowes (by the muſe ador'd)
When love-ſick *Shenſtone* was the Leaſowes' lord.

* Scio, formerly Chios. An iſle in the Egean ſea, famous for the mellifluent redundancy of its vallies, excellent wines and beautiful women. The inhabitants alſo contend with ſeveral other places for the honour of having Homer for their countryman, (ſays Sandys) notwithſtanding it is not noticed in the following old couplet:

Seven cities ſtrive for Homer's birth: Smyrna, Iôs,
Rhodes, Colophon, Salamis, Athens, and Argos.

There is alſo an ever-green peculiar to this iſland, of which an old poet writes thus:

The Lentiſk ever green, and ever great
With grateful fruit, three different ſorts doth bear,
Three harveſts yields, is thrice dreſt in one year.

† A beautiful farm near Birmingham, of which Mr. Dodſley has given a very ingenuous deſcription in the works of William Shenſtone, Eſq.

Once

Once with his * *Delia* (ah! too cruel maid)
As thro' theſe moſt enchanting walks he ſtray'd,
Noting each beauty as they mov'd along,
The charming concerts of the woodland throng,
The chearful murmur of the glaſſy rills,
Which wind between the daiſy veſted hills,
Th' embroidered margin of the limpid lake,
Each roſe-cap'd dingle and each woodbine brake;
The while ſoft rapture ſparkled in their eyes,
They felt that peace which innocence ſupplies;
No thought of brooding care aſſail'd the breaſt,
For *Delia* had not yet † diſturb'd his reſt;
Nature they prais'd, and all that ſhe had giv'n,
They knew but love and gratitude to Heav'n.
Now to avoid the ſultry noon-tide ray,
The Lovers to the covert took their way;
The covert where a thouſand ſweets diffuſe,
Sacred to ‡ *Thomſon* and the ſylvan muſe:

* This lady's real name was Wilmot.
† See Shenſtone's Works. ‡ The Author of the Seaſons.

Juſt

Juſt as they enter'd the inſpiring ſhade,
Suppoſing that no human eye ſurvey'd,
He, then enraptur'd, thus addreſs'd his Love:---
" O! would my *Delia* but theſe bow'rs approve;
" Theſe honor'd bow'rs where *Thomſon* oft has trod,
" Wrapt in the contemplation of his God;
" Here thro' the livelong day he'd ſweetly ſing,
" And with his *Shenſtone*'s flow'rs adorn his *Spring*;
" His tuneful *Summer* to my bliſsful farm
" Owes many a ſcene, derives full many a charm;
" *Autumn* and *Winter* were by him improv'd
" In theſe ſweet walks, my friend ſo dearly lov'd;
" To him this ſeat ('twas all my ſtore could give)
" I rear'd, in hopes *his* fame might *mine* out-live.
" O! may my Love this ſculptor'd * ſeat approve,
" The winding ſtream and dripping fount above,

" * It is not very eaſy either to paint or deſcribe this delightful grove: however,
" as the former has been more than once attempted, I will hope to apologize for an
" imperfect deſcription, by the difficulty found by thoſe who have aimed to ſketch it
" with their pencil. Be it, therefore, firſt obſerved, that the whole ſcene is opake
" and gloomy, conſiſting of a ſmall deep valley or dingle, the ſides of which are in-
" cloſed with irregular tufts of hazle and other underwood; and the whole over-
" ſhadowed with lofty trees riſing out of the dingle, through which a copious ſtream
" makes

" Round which the Dryads, when the moon is up,
" Hang the clear dew-drop in the hare-bell's cup,
" Or join the circle when each jocund fay
" Foots it around to Philomela's lay;
" Could ſhe prefer this bloom, theſe ever-greens,
" And find contentment 'midſt theſe rural ſcenes,
" Where the ſoft breezes rove my Love to greet,
" And baſhful cowſlips riſe to kiſs her feet,
" Then would her *Shenſtone* greater pleaſure feel,
" Than words can paint or human looks reveal:
" Would ſhe but quit the buſy city life
" For downy peace, and be her *Shenſtone's* wife;

" makes its way through moſſy banks, enamelled with primroſes, and variety of wild
" wood flowers. The firſt ſeat we approach in thus inſcribed;

CELEBERRIMO POETAE
JACOBO THOMSON
PROPE FONTES ILLI NON FASTIDITOS
G. S.
SEDEM HANC ORNAVIT.

" Quæ tibi, quæ tali reddam pro carmine dona?
" Nam neque me tantum venientis ſibilus auſtri,
" Nec percuſſa juvant fluctu tam litora, nec quæ
" Saxoſas inter decurrunt flumina valles."

" This ſeat is placed upon a ſteep bank on the edge of the valley; from which the eye
" is here drawn down into the flat below, by the light that glimmers in front, and by
" the ſound of various caſcades, by which the winding ſtream is agreeably broken. Op-

" Then would he ſay the kinder pow'rs had giv'n
" The greateſt boon beneath th' expanſe of Heav'n;
" O! would my *Delia*, queen of ev'ry charm,
" But condeſcend to call my little farm
" Her own, what life has yet of good behind,
" Should be employ'd to make my *Delia* kind;
" Each gladſome ſound that could impart
" A joy to elevate your *Shenſtone*'s heart,
" Should loſe the pow'r to move his faithful breaſt,
" Till *Delia* firſt was with the tidings bleſt;
" O would my *Delia*," *Shenſtone* ſtill had ſaid,
But rude Intruſion here profan'd the ſhade;

" poſite to this ſeat the ground riſes again in an eaſy concave to a kind of dripping foun-
" tain, when a ſmall rill trickles down a rude nich of rock work through fern, liver-
" wort, and aquatic weeds. The green area in the middle, through which the ſtream
" winds, being as well ſhaped as can be imagined. After falling down theſe caſcades, it
" winds under a bridge of one arch, and then empties itſelf into a ſmall lake, which
" catches it a little below. This terminates the ſcene upon the right; and after theſe
" objects have ſome time amuſed the ſpectator, his eye rambles to the left, where one
" of the moſt beautiful caſcades imaginable is ſeen, by way of incident, through a
" kind of viſta, or glade, falling down a precipice over-arched with trees, and ſtrikes
" us with ſurprize. It is impoſſible to expreſs the pleaſure which one feels on this
" occaſion; for though ſurprize alone is not excellence, it may ſerve to quicken the
" effect of what is beautiful. I believe none ever beheld this grove, without a thorough
" ſenſe of ſatisfaction; and were one to chuſe any one particular ſpot of this perfectly
" Arcadian farm, it ſhould, perhaps, be this." See Dodſley's Deſcription of the Leaſowes.

A ruſtic arm'd, with ſacrilegious hands
Attacks the owner, and his gold demands;
The gentle *Delia*, ſtruck with wild ſurprize,
Preſs'd the green ſod, and clos'd her ſapphire eyes;
To *Shenſtone*'s head the tube of death was rear'd,
The robber *trembled*, (*not* the good man fear'd)
From fault'ring lips ſuch imprecations fell,
As ill befit the ſober muſe to tell;
His livid eyes within their ſockets roll,
And ſpake the perturbation of his ſoul;
Stammering (at length) he own'd the hand of need
Had forc'd him hapleſs to the deſp'rate deed;
More he had ſaid, but *Shenſtone* with a ſigh,
That ſpake the kindeſt heart beneath the ſky,
Thus to the man of ſorrow made reply:
" *Shenſtone*, unhappy man's, as * poor as thee;
" But take this trifle, 'twas a gift to me;

* It is much to be lamented, that Shenſtone had not a fortune equal to the greatneſs of his mind. The narrowneſs of his circumſtances, and that exquiſite taſte for which he was ſo much admired, together with the want of œconomy, oftentimes rendered him extremely poor; tranſitions which might have been attended with very diſagreeable conſequences, if the bounty of ſome within the circle of his acquaintance had not

" May you find comfort from its little ſtore,---
" Go! be adviſ'd, purſue this courſe no more;
" Keep thy own ſecret, for I've not the will
" To ſeek for juſtice, or to do thee ill;
" Haſte! quit this place, 'tis dang'rous thus to ſtand,
" For I've a truſty ſervant juſt at hand."
At this the robber leap'd a neighb'ring mound,
While *Shenſtone* rais'd his *Delia* from the ground;
The life return'd again, ſhe hears, ſhe ſpeaks,
And roſes join the lilies of her cheeks;
He bore her gently thro' the darkling grove,
Chac'd ev'ry fear, and then purſu'd his love.
Colin, who ſat beneath a beachen ſhade,
Beheld the ruſtic ſcud along the glade;

not relieved him. The late right honourable Lady Luxborough, in a letter to Shenſtone, very politely takes notice of his want of this domeſtic virtue, which, in perſons of contract ideas, is certainly a fault, but in Shenſtone the imprudence ſeems to wear the face of ſomething not ſo reprehenſible. (She ſays)

" I hope you will give me rules for œconomy; nobody wants them more: but I " ſuſpect you will not give me ſuch as I might learn between Temple-Bar and the " Stones-End. In ſhort, I have no great opinion of your rudiments in this ſcience, " though, perhaps, you may know theory better than the practice of it: and you may " be a good ſpeculative œconomiſt for what I know; but I never met with a practical " one in a ſoul where generoſity and benevolence had a place, or to which a bright " genius was joined."

He

He view'd the ſtranger with the niceſt care,
For much he wonder'd what had brought him there;
He ſaw him pauſe; then croſs the footway take,
And caſt a piſtol in the ſilver lake;
And while mute horror in his face appear'd,
He ſtopp'd, he ſtarted at each ſound he hear'd;
Juſt as he came where *Colin* ſat unſeen,
He caſt a tranſient look acroſs the green,
Thinking no one his trembling frame purſu'd,
Nor dreaming that his actions there were view'd;
Strait from his breaſt a ſilken purſe he drew,
Took the contents, the reſt far off he threw,
The noted toy the faithful ſervant knew,
'Twas richly garniſh'd with a ſilver band,
The gift of * *Lyttleton*'s benignant hand,
Whoſe real worth e'en Envy muſt commend,
The poet's patron and the good man's friend.
Keen-ey'd Suſpicion, ſwift as ſwifteſt thought,
Inſpir'd the lad whom Reaſon well had taught:
" This is ſome villain ſure; or why (he ſaid)
" Theſe ſudden ſtarts and looks of one afraid:

* The right honourable Lady Lyttleton, mother of the preſent Lord Lyttleton, a great benefactor to Shenſtone.

" The ſilken purſe, his look behind, his flight,
" Each recent circumſtance confirms me right;
" I'll ſtraight purſue him thro' the groves (he cry'd)
" And follow till I'm further ſatisfy'd."
This ſaid; he left the covert where he'd ſtood,
And follow'd devious thro' th' embow'ring wood,
The track the haſty robber had purſu'd
'Twas vain to trace; but careful *Colin* view'd,
And by his cunning full as early paſs'd
The bound'ry fence, as he who fled ſo faſt;
Still he purſu'd the panting ruſtic's flight,
And (unſuſpected) kept him ſtill in ſight,
Till where *Hales Owen*'s ſlender ſpire is ſeen,
Juſt riſing o'er the eye-delighting green,
There did he ſtop; he looked round awhile,
Forſook the path, and fought a diſtant ſtile;
Along a trackleſs way the robber took,
Vaulted the fence and leap'd a rippling brook,
By whoſe rude ſide a clay-patch'd hovel ſtood,
Contiguous to a ſolitary wood:
Firſt climbing up a ſloping ſod-clad mound,
He caſt his eyes with eagerneſs around;

When

When nought perceiving to increaſe his care,
He enter'd ſtrait the dwelling of deſpair.
Penſive and wretched, on a ruſhy bed,
The roof its covering, the rude floor its ſtead;
Stranger to ſoothing Hope, and rack'd with pain,
Sat the poor partner of the hapleſs ſwain;
To raiſe her meagre frame ſhe ſeem'd too weak,
The big round drops bedew'd each hollow cheek,
Oft ſhe eſſay'd, as oft ſhe fail'd to ſpeak;
For tyrant grief, the keeneſt foe to reſt,
Had bound her tongue, and all her ſoul poſſeſs'd;
Cloſe to her ſide, her little offspring dear
Sigh'd to her ſighs, and paid her tear for tear;
So ſat the dame, deſpairing of relief,
In all the ſilent eloquence of grief:
A ſcene ſo ſad could av'rice ſelf explore,
He'd feel a pang he never felt before.
The ruſtic ſtarted at the woeful ſcene;
'Tis not for words to tell his troubled mien;
Great was the perturbation of his breaſt---
This muſt ſuffice, and fancy paint the reſt.---

Now when the conflict of his ſoul was o'er,
And reaſon haſt'ned to his aid once more;
With tearful eyes (as forth the gold he drew)
He thus addreſs'd the almoſt famiſh'd crew:
" Behold, you weeping innocents, behold
" The price for which thy father's peace is ſold;
" No more that gentleſt tenant of the breaſt,
" Untainted honeſty, muſt be my gueſt;
" For at the *Leaſowes* (ah! accurſt the place)
" I've robb'd the kindeſt of the human race;
" Uttering the while with my polluted breath,
" Oaths and menaces of inſtant death;
" While *he*, with ſoftneſs not to be expreſs'd,
" Pitying the cauſe that robb'd my ſoul of reſt,
" Uſher'd this tempter to my trembling hands,
" O! that they'd been, ere that, in ſtrongeſt bands:
" E'en as I turn'd to quit his injur'd ſight,
' Be ſafe, he ſaid, and ſeek immediate flight.'
" O could I once recal the fatal hour,
" Not keen diſtreſs, with all its giant pow'r,
" Should force me from dear Honor's path to run,
" But 'tis in vain, the guileful deed is done,"

" Uſher'd

This ſaid, he caſt the gold upon the floor,
And bade his little ones be ſad no more.---
Colin, whoſe vigilance might well outvie
The ſpaniel's cunning, or th' eagle's eye,
Had by ſome means obtain'd the lonely ſpot,
Juſt as the ruſtic reach'd his ſtraw-clad cot,
And cloſe he ſtood beneath the low-built thatch,
E'en as the robber made ſecure his latch;
Where thro' a cranny ruthleſs time had made,
He, with amazement, the ſad ſcene ſurvey'd;
All that was ſaid inform'd his liſt'ning ear,
He heard each ſigh, and ſaw each falling tear;
His gentle boſom caught the ſpreading grief,
Felt a keen pang, and wiſh'd a quick relief;
The ſight too ſad for tenderneſs to bear
He ſtrait forſook, and ſought, oppreſs'd with care,
The beaten track that to the *Leaſowes* led,
And on the wings of ſwift impatience fled.
---Thus to his maſter faithful *Colin* flew,
And told the *Man of Feeling* all he knew;
Who, as the mournful tale aſſail'd his ear,
Dropt from his melting eye an holy tear;

Speechleſs he ſtood, it was his uſual way,
Whenever chance ſuch tidings might convey,
As gave ſoft pity o'er the mind to ſway;
Mean while, for much he felt the kindred grief,
And meditated much to give relief,
The guardian pow'r that hover'd o'er his head,
Swifter than thought to Heav'n's high Chanc'ry fled;
And there recumbent at the throne of grace,
Spake of the manly tear that deck'd his face;
The firſt beatific ſpirit on high---
Gave it in record to eternity.---
Sol, from the weſtern hills, had borne his fire,
The Moon had ſilver'd o'er the village ſpire;
All Nature gently ſunk to ſweet repoſe,
Save where the bird who loves the ev'ning's cloſe,
Pour'd from the ſolitary brake her woes:
Colin withdrew, while *Shenſtone* ſought his reſt,
And ſunk, in viſionary ſlumbers, bleſt.

PART THE SECOND.

NOW bright *Aurora* wak'd the golden morn,
Wide ſcatt'ring pearls o'er ev'ry blooming thorn;
Refreſhing breezes from their ſtations fly,
Each ſcene gave rapture to the wand'ring eye;
Sweet blow'd the bloom upon the broom-clad wild,
And earth and heav'n upon each other ſmil'd;
High o'er th' orient hill the ſkylark gay
Carrol'd, to greet the riſing beams of day;
And from the topmoſt bows the birds diſtend
Their downy throats, to greet their kindeſt friend;
E'en the poor wren her ſong of praiſe began,
(A grateful leſſon for ungrateful man)
When *Shenſtone* roſe from ſoft and balmy reſt,
Peace in his eye, kind pity in his breaſt;
He left his home, and then without delay,
To *Hales Owen* took the long-frequented way;
Arriv'd, (by no unmanly motive fir'd)
He ſtrait the conduct of the ſwain enquir'd;

This

This judg'd him honeſt, but declar'd he'd been
Tracing the place with a dejected mien;
Some ſaid, the man much real worth poſſeſs'd,
And own'd, they thought he was by want diſtreſs'd;
Others declar'd, it gave them poignant grief
To ſee him wretched, and without relief;
Wiſhing that they were bleſt with chearing wealth,
To ſend the balm of comfort and of health;
* They ſpake of thoſe who could the means ſupply,
And yet refus'd to ſtop the riſing ſigh.

* Here I cannot help obſerving, (however I may be cenſured for the digreſſion) that the wants of the labouring part of mankind, are little attended to by thoſe perſons who have it moſt in their power to prevent the evils which frequently ariſe from neceſſity. The man of titles and riches, is not only indebted to the hand that guides the plough for the bread he eats, but for doing that drudgery his aſſumed conſequence will not let him deſcend to; as this, I believe, cannot with juſtice be contradicted, how much have ſuch to anſwer for, who, in a ſeaſon of ſcarcity, have ſeen their fellow-creatures famiſh for a ſmall ſupply of that their ſpacious granaries have contained; who, while they more than ſufficed their own wants, refuſed to diſpenſe what the vileſt of vermin (the rats) have plentifully fed on. That great ornament to his country, Sir Thomas More, has written very learnedly on this ſubject; as it will not be foreign to my purpoſe, I ſhall quote a paſſage from his *Utopia*, and beg the reader's patience for the length of it. Speaking of the juſtice amongſt the different civilized nations, he ſays, "May I periſh, if I ſee any thing that looks either like juſtice or equity; for "what juſtice is there in this, that a nobleman, a goldſmith, or a banker, or any "other man, that either does nothing at all, or at beſt is employed in things that are "of no uſe to the public, ſhould live in great luxury and ſplendor upon that which is "ſo ill acquired; and a mean man, a carter, a ſmith, or a ploughman, that works "harder even than the beaſts themſelves, and is employed in labours that are ſo neceſſary, that no common-wealth could hold out a year to an end without them, can yet "be able to earn ſo poor a livelihood out of it, and muſt lead ſo miſerable a life in it, "that the beaſts condition is much better than theirs? For as the beaſts do not work "ſo conſtantly, ſo they feed almoſt as well, and more pleaſantly; and have no anxiety "about

Pleas'd that his character appear'd ſo well,
They left the town and ſought the ruſtic's cell:
Soon as our *Shenſtone* ſaw the homely roof,
He bade his ſervant ſtand awhile aloof;
Then drew the latch, and with a graceful mien,
Hail'd the rude tenants of the wretched ſcene;---
Who can deſcribe the feelings of the ſwain?
He knew 'twas *Shenſtone* thro' the ſhiver'd pane;
And at the threſhold of his ſad retreat,
Threw himſelf proſtrate at the good man's feet;
His feeble partner on her trembling knees,
With eyes bedimm'd with famine and diſeaſe,
Though careleſs of her own diſaſt'rous ſtate,
Implor'd forgiveneſs for her hapleſs mate;
The little train forſook their ſcanty meal,
And to th' injur'd man in artleſs order kneel,

" about that which is to come; whereas theſe men are depreſſed by a barren employ-
" ment, and are tormented with the apprehenſions of want in their old age; ſince that
" which they get by their daily labour, does but maintain them at preſent, and is con-
" ſumed as faſt as it comes in; ſo that there is no overplus left them which they can
" lay up for old age. Is not that government both unjuſt and ungrateful, that is ſo
" prodigal of its favours to thoſe that are called gentlemen, or goldſmiths, or ſuch
" others that are idle, or live either by flattery, or by contriving the arts of vain
" pleaſure? and on the other hand, takes no care of thoſe of a meaner ſort, ſuch as
" ploughmen, colliers, ſmiths, without whom it could not ſubſiſt: but after the pub-
" lic has been ſerved by them, and that they come to be oppreſſed with age, ſickneſs,
" and want, all their labours, and the good that they have done, is forgotten, and all
" the recompence given them, is, that they are left to die in great miſery."

Raiſing their guiltleſs hands in fervent pray'r,
That *Shenſtone* might their weeping parents ſpare;---
Such was the ſcene ſoft Pity's ſon ſurvey'd,
So wept the dame, ſo was the ſwain diſmay'd.
E'en as the Cedar rears aloft its head,
Whoſe branches for the tuneful race are ſpread,
Whoſe fragrant leaves moſt haleſome ſweets diſpenſe,
Soft to the heart, and grateful to the ſenſe;
Tow'rd Heav'n he turn'd his eyes, and ſeem'd to ſay,
" Thou glorious ſource of everlaſting day!
" If I refuſe this wretched ruſtic train
" Sincere forgiveneſs, when ſevereſt pain
" Aſſails my frame, and I apply to thee,
" Mayſt thou deny the boon of eaſe to me!"
So ſtood the pious man, while from his face,
Irradiate ſhone the beams of heav'nly grace;
Wrapt were his thoughts on acts of love divine,
And Heav'ns high pow'r approv'd his great deſign.
Ye ſons of pow'r, from whom the poor are driv'n,
To whom the balance and the ſword are giv'n,
Who deal out juſtice with a partial ſway,
Excuſing thoſe who have but means to pay,

Think

Think not to taſte the rapture I deſcribe,
Such bliſs was ne'er intended for your tribe.
Shenſtone, deſcending from his joy profound,
Rais'd the poor penitents from off the ground;
" Be happy if you can (he ſaid) for know
" I come to baniſh, not increaſe your woe;
" Full well is known the cauſe that made you ſtray,
" The fault's forgiv'n you, and I'll point the way
" To foſt'ring Hope, the balm of ev'ry ill;
" So mark me peaſant, and obey my will;
" Soon as to-morrow's ſun ſhall gild the plain,
" Bring you your partner and her little train
" Strait to the *Leaſowes*, where the cherub Peace
" Shall ſoothe your breaſts, and bid your troubles ceaſe,
" There you ſhall live, and thro' the circling year
" Help me my buildings and my grots to rear;
" Direct my alleys, turn the mellow ſoil,
" For you, I know, are us'd to ſylvan toil;
" There ſhalt thou thrive beneath thy maſter's care,
" And nurſe thy offspring and their health repair;
" While ſtill in *Shenſtone*'s breaſt thy ſecret lies,
" There needs but this; Be ſilent and be wiſe:

" Thy

" Thy fate already has been moſt ſevere,
" Go, and let this yon hapleſs mourner chear;
" And know, tho' you rejoice ſecure to live,
" 'Tis greater bliſs to me that joy to give."
This ſaid, he bade th' offender to be gay,
And he and *Colin* homeward took their way.

Soon to the *Leaſowes* ſped the gladſome ſwain,
And ſoon *Hygeia* deckt his infant train;
The lowly mother of the little crew,
Soon found her cheek aſſume the roſy hue;
And now content, without the leaſt alloy,
Danced before them to the ſong of joy;
Year after year, before th' inſpiring ſun
With us his bleſt diurnal courſe begun,
The grateful peaſant, to his *Shenſtone* true,
With pray'rs and bleſſings did his toil renew;
The groves and vallies, which ſo much could pleaſe,
The ſmaller ſhrubs and interwoven trees,
The ſilver lake and clear meand'ring rill,
The clover glades, the bloom-embroider'd hill,
Were all by his peculiar care and art,
Taught to give health and pleaſure to the heart;

Where

Where e'er the wand'ring eye might chance to ſtray,
The ſcene did ſuch a fund of bliſs convey,
That one might wiſh to gaze till cloſe of day.
But ah! how ſhort is happineſs below!
And how unequal to the ills we know!
If we to-day one moment's joy poſſeſs,
To-morrow brings an hundred of diſtreſs;
Uncertain's all the fleeting hours beſtow,
Content alone muſt make our bliſs below;
Then live reſign'd, and wiſely learn from hence,
That juſt are all the ways of Providence.

Long dwelt the ruſtic in this peaceful haunt,
Blithe and impervious to the tyrant want,
Till at the unrelenting call of death,
His patron yielded up his pious breath;
Then with an heart as kind, as pure as e'er
Commun'd with Providence in ſecret pray'r;
Along the meadows to the doleful knell,
Follow'd the maſter whom he lov'd ſo well;

Long did he mourn the man who lov'd to ſave,
Sprinkling with tears of gratitude his grave;
Till the great Author of Benevolence,
Who can at will or life or death diſpenſe,
Call'd him, reſign'd, from this his low abode,
To join, at once, his *Shenſtone* and his God.
Think not this tale the hand of fiction drew;
Who knew the man muſt know my ſong is true.
As the beſt ſoil will bring the rankeſt weeds,
So the beſt heart may bear the vileſt deeds,
If the great pow'r who well our weakneſs knows,
Doth not his will benignant interpoſe.
Full many a being in the round of time,
Has thro' neceſſity embark'd in crime;
Who (till ſeduc'd to play the villain's part)
Was fam'd for truth and innocence of heart;
Such have by law been doom'd to yield their breath,
And undeſerved felt the pangs of death.
The grateful ruſtic whom I ſang of late,
Had ſurely met an ignominious fate,

But that the *Man of Pity* heard his pray'r,
And ſav'd from pain, from death, and from deſpair.
O bleſt Benevolence! how great is he,
Who is, without alloy, poſſeſs'd of thee;
The mightieſt monarch on his throne of ſtate,
Surrounded by the fair, the learn'd, the great,
Profuſely furniſh'd with *Golconda*'s ſtore,
And richeſt odours of the ſpicy ſhore;
Dealing at will a ſceptre or a rod,
Whilſt thouſands ſuppliant tremble at his nod,
Owns not a virtue if he owns not this;
Benevolence; true ſource of real bliſs.
The humbleſt ruſtic of the humbleſt vale,
Whoſe peaceful wiſh ne'er ſtray'd beyond his flail,
Except, great Pow'r! when he commun'd with thee,
And begg'd the bleſſing of eternity;
This artleſs peaſant in his plain attire,
The loweſt vaſſal of the proudeſt 'ſquire,
If in his breaſt preſides the bliſs I ſing,
Is greater far than this luxurious king.

In vain we greet the conqueror with renown,
And wreath around his brow the laurel crown;
In vain we deck with pow'r and ev'ry grace,
The fell deſtroyers of the human race;
Raiſe up the maſſy ſculptor'd pile on high,
With all the colours of the orient ſky,
And blaze his rapine to eternity.

Rare in the field the *real hero*'s found,
Obſcure he lives, nor ſighs to be renown'd;
Peaceful and lowly, he ſtill ſcorning ſtrife,
Remains and courts the humble vale of life:
To no ſtrict, rigid mode of faith confin'd,
He wiſhes happineſs to all mankind;
Nor only wiſhes, but with pious care,
He ſtrives to bring the mighty good to bear;
Where want aſſails he's ſure to interpoſe,
And finds delight in healing others woes;
His frugal hoard is often turn'd to thrift,
Not as a mean or mercenary drift,

But as a fountain to afford ſupply,
When to the wretched ev'ry ſource is dry;
If to ſuch gentle ways ſucceſs is giv'n,
No more he aſks, no more expects of Heav'n;
But with a ſoul borne up on ſacred wings,
Regardleſs of all ſublunary things;
His neighbour loves, adores the pow'r on high,
And waits his bright reverſion in the ſky.

THE END.